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A  
SERMON  
PREACHED BE-  
FORE THE KING  
at VVhite-Hall, the tenth  
of March.

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By Doctor TURNER, one of His  
MAJESTIES Chaplaines.

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Command. 1

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Presented by Richard D. ...  
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S<sup>t</sup>. MATTH. Chap. 9. Verse 13.

*But goe yee, and learne what that  
meaneth; I will have mercy, and not  
sacrifice.*



It was Saint PAUL'S  
charge to *Timothy* Bi-  
shop of *Ephesus*; That  
Hee should give at-  
tendanceto Reading,  
to Exhortation, and  
to Doctrin, 1 E-  
pist. Chap. 4. Verse 13.

And that the same was the practice of  
a greater than either *Timothy* or *Paul*, even  
of CHRIST Himselfe, the great Bishop  
of our soules, my Text makes it plaine.

For first, That He gave heed to reading,  
to reading the Prophets, who can doubt;

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when

when as here he cites a Text out of one of them, *Hosea c. 6. v. 6.* There it is written, *Misericordiam volui, &c.*

Secondly, He delivers it, as a Doctrine or Maxime in Divinity; That G O D accepts Mercy rather than Sacrifice.

Thirdly, He exhorts the *Pharisees* to goe study this Doctrine, till they well understand the meaning of it. *Goe yee and learne what that meaneth.*

*Two Parts.*

The Doctrine it selfe; and C H R I S T'S Exhortation to learne it, are the two Generals, on which I purpose at this time to insist.

As for his reading the Prophets, That was an Act precedent to this: And of that I shall speake onely a word or two, by way of Preface.

First then; That He who had the Spirit without measure. *S. Ioh. 3. 34.* And needed not that man should teach Him any thing; Hee that was not onely *didrachmē*, taught of G O D; but *didrachmē*, G O D as well as *man*; That He doth yet vouchsafe to reade the Prophets writings, and to borrow Doctrines out of them, for the instruction



(3)

struction of His Auditors; besides that He humbles *Himselfe* very much, and doth *them* much honour; Hee doth moreover teach us, highly to esteeme the Scriptures; and not to expect private revelations, in matters whereof we may be informed by the Word of G O D.

Againe, That He sends them to the Prophets, it was very proper, and it argues his wisdome: for this was to instruct Them, out of such Authors, as themselves did not, could not gain-say. For the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, and generally all the *Jewes*, did receive the Prophets, as Writers inspired by G O D; and therefore they the fittest Authours, by whom they could be convinced of error, and reduced to the truth. All Scripture is, indeed, given by inspiration, and is profitable for instruction in righteousness, 2 *Epist. to Timoth. c 3. v. 16*. Yet not all Scripture fit to instruct all sorts of Men: If you would convert an unbelieving *Jew*, you must doe it out of *Moses* and the Prophets: To goe about to perswade Him, out of the New Testament, were to begge the Question.

When Saint *Peter* would prove, that the Gospell of **CHRIST** was not a cunningly devised *Fable*, but the truth of **GOD**; He voucheth for it a Voice from heaven, which Himselfe, with some others, had heard, saying, *This is my beloved Sonne, in whom I am well pleased,* 2 *Epiſt. c. i. v. 17.*

To have rested here, had beene to require that their faith in this matter might be built upon the bare testimony of Himselfe and His Fellowes; The Apostle doth not so, but addes in the next verse; *We have also a more sure Word of Prophecie.* What? Is the testimony of the Prophets more sure than the Voice from heaven? Yes, to the *Jewes* more sure, though not in it selfe.

*Lactantius, lib. 5. cap. 4.* taxes *S. Cyprian*, for that, being to refute *Demetrianus* a profest enimie to the Truth, He handled not the matter as was fit. For such a one (saith he) was not to be convinced by Scripture, (which He rejected as idle, emptie talke) but by arguments drawne from reason. His meaning is, that, whether we establish truth, or refell error, we ought still to apply our selves, and accommodate our discourse

course to the parties with whom we have to deale. A *Rule*, which our Saviour here observes, whil'st he commends to the consideration of the *Pharisees*, a Doctrine borrowed from one of their owne Prophets. What that Doctrine was, I come now to consider. *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.* 'Tis spoken in the Person of G O D : But the Question is, whether by *Mercy* Hee understand that compalsion which Himselfe shewes towards Men; or that love and kindnesse, which He expects one Man should shew to another.

Neither sense is amisse; both are defended by learned Authours. The former, I confesse, is full of consolation; for what greater comfort can there be to a poore sinner, than to be assured, that G O D doth more delight in shewing mercy to His servants, then in any service, that they can performe towards Him? Indeed, it were but a vaine thing to dispute, what service of ours He best accepts, and most delights in; did He not chiefly delight in His owne mercy: for without that, it were not possible He should accept of any thing from us.

The whole duty of Man may (you know) be reduced to these two Heads, *Mercy*, and *Sacrifice* : *Mercy* to his Brother, and *Sacrifice* to his G O D : But woe be unto us, if our heavenly Father should lay aside *His mercy*, when Hee comes to examine, how wee performe either of these duties.

Let this therefore be laid as an infallible ground ; That not for any worth in our good workes, nor for any need that Hee hath of them, but for His meere mercies sake, G O D acceptsthem.

Howbeit, I cannot grant this to be the true meaning of my Text ; wherein I conceive the comparison to be made, not betwixt G O D's *mercy*, and our *sacrifices* ; But betwixt those *workes of charity* which we doe towards our Brethren, and that *outward worship*, which wee tender immediately to G O D. And if it be (as certainly it is) great mercy in G O D, that He vouchsafes to accept of *either* of these ; it must needs be greater mercy, that He prefers the *former* before the *later*, *mercy* before *sacrifice* ; which is the Doctrine here delivered.

vered. In the handling whereof, this (I hope) I may take for granted, and not trouble you with the prooffe of it; that it is not a simple Negation; but onely a comparison: *Et non* importing as much as *Plusquam*. Mercy and not Sacrifice, that is, Mercy rather than Sacrifice.

So then the Doctrine thus explained, I resolve into three Propositions:

- 1 GOD accepts sacrifice.
- 2 GOD accepts mercy.
- 3 GOD accepts mercy rather than sacrifice.

For the first: That there is a GOD, is a truth acknowledged even by those who could wish it false. That, if there be a Deitie, Hee is to be worshipped, there never was man so impious as to deny. And therefore every Religion, as well false, as true, hath alwayes had some sacrifice or other, to offer to that *God*, which it professed to worship. It was usuall with the Heathens, to offer unto their Idoll gods, the flesh of beasts and birds, even whole Hecatombs. And that the True GOD did not reject (but well accept) the same kind  
of

of worship (seeme it never so strange) 'tis most true. His acceptation appeares, in that He answered them by fire from heaven, which consumed such sacrifice. So we reade, *2 Chron. 7. 1. 1 Reg. 18. 38.* And 'tis expressly said, *Gen. 4. 4.* That *G O D* had respect unto Abel, and to his sacrifice. And this he did, not that He meant to eat buls flesh, or drinke the bloud of goats, as the *Psalmist* speakes. But for reasons, tending to the good of his People.

As partly to prevent the sinne of Idolatry, to which (he knew) the *Iewes* were much addicted. Partly to prefigure that great expiatory Sacrifice, which was, in due time, to bee offered upon the Altar of the Crosse, for the sinnes of all mankind. And thirdly, To beget and cherish religious impressions in mens mindes, touching the greatnesse and bounty of their Maker: For, whosoever offered any sacrifice to *G O D*, He did by that act protest and testifie, that All, whatsoever he had, proceeded from *G O D*, as the Creator and Donor of it; and therefore could not be better employed, then upon Him and His Service.

'Tis

'Tis true, that this kinde of worship, in proesse of time, grew out of date; G O D declared Himselfe, that He tooke no pleasure in it; that He was weary of it; that he could not abide it, *Psal.* 51. 16. *Esay* 1. 11. *Ierem.* 7. 22. and many other places of holy Writ.

Neverthelesse wee must not imagine, that the people of G O D were then left destitute of all manner of sacrifice. The Hea-then Philosophers if they could but have proved, that the Christians had no Sacrifice to offer to their G O D, they would have asked no better argument, to prove that they had no religion at all. But this they were never able to doe: For when they had no Calves of the stall, yet they had still *vitulos labiorum*, the Calves of their lips, Prayers, and Praises: when they ceased to lay young Bullocks, they ceased not to lay other Oblations on G O D's Altar; and these were as well accepted, as they: yea, and for the more decent and solemne performance of such Divine Offices, Times and Places have beene set apart, and other Circumstances ordered, by G O D's speciall



command: which is enough to prove my first Proposition, *viz.* GOD accepts Sacrifice.

Now whereas all Sacrifice, as it is a worship of GOD, consists of two parts; the inward affection, and the outward act: By Sacrifice in my Text I understand the latter, namely the *outward worship*. And my assertion is, That with *this* also GOD is well pleased; albeit He be *better* pleased with the other.

The *Scribes* and *Pharisees* they were wholly for this; In *outward* shew the most religious men in the world: No such professed haters of Idolatry; no so strict observers of the Sabbath; none that resorted so duly to the Synagogues, or made such long prayers, as they. Yet against none so frequently, as against them, did CHRIST denounce His woe.

Was it our *Saviours* meaning (thinke yee) to blame them for what they did? No such matter: But for somewhat that they left undone. He liked well their *outside*; but found fault, that their *inside* was not answerable. It was not his intent, that they



they should fall into the other extreame, that is, contract the whole worship of God into the inner man; but that to the *externall profession*, which already they had, they should joyn the *inward devotion* of the heart, which they wanted.

It's worth our observation, how God hath dealt with some men, who have done Him *outward service*; their *hearts*, in the meane time, being not *upright*. For Instance; with *Iehu*, and with *Ahab*. Hee threatned *Ahab* that He would bring evill on him. *Ahab* hearing this, rent his cloaths, put sack-cloth upon his flesh, and \* fasted. <sup>1 Reg. 21. 21.</sup> \* <sup>Verf. 27.</sup> Vpon this outward humiliation (for it was no better) God was graciously pleased (though not to take off, yet) to adjourne the menaced punishment till his sonne's Dayes, *verse 29.*

As for *Iehu*, to him Hee gave the Kingdome of *Israel*, and to his children to the fourth generation: because he performed the *Opus operatum*, at least, in executing that which was right in God's eyes, and doing to the House of *Ahab*, according to all that <sup>2 Reg. 10. 30.</sup> was in his heart.

I would not be mistaken, as if I proposed *Iehu*, as a good Patterne of Obedience; or commended *Ahab*, as an Example of true Repentance.

I grant that *Iehu* did not well, in not being obedient; that *Ahab* did not well, in not being humbled, with an upright heart: Yet they both had done much worse; the one, if he had not been obedient; the other, if not humbled at all.

Nor was it their Hypocrisie that GOD rewarded: Onely in them Hee gave testimony, how readie Hee is to cherish the smallest sparke of goodnesse, in whomsoever Hee findes it: And such was their outward performance; Good, at least, so farre forth, as a thing lesse evill, may in comparison of a worse, be termed Good.

Let it therefore bee our care, so to beate downe Hypocrisie, that wee set not up Prophanenesse in the roome of it: So to perswade men from making a *meere shew* of godlinesse, that wee deterre them not from making *so much as a shew*.

Yea,

Yea, but you will say; G O D never blamed any one, for being defective in his outward worshippe. Hee complaines, *This people draweth neere to mee. Esa. With their lippes, but their hearts are farre from mee.*

But He never complaines; *This people draweth neere to mee with their hearts, but their lips are farre from mee.*

It's true; and the reason's plaine; because it is scarce possible, that any one should draw neere to G O D with his *heart*, and keepe distance with his *lippes*: That he should performe the inward service, and make no expression of it in the outward man. But if it were as obvious, for the *heart* to be religious, and the *lippes* prophane; as it is for the *lippes* to be religious, and the *heart* prophane; doubtlesse G O D would complaine of *that*, as well as of *this*, though (perhaps) not so much of *that* as of *this*.

To shew up this Point. Certaine it is, that God requires the service both of our *Bodies*, and our *Spirits*, for both are His. And 1 Cor. 6. 20. though wee cannot be said to have done

our dutie, except we performe *both*; Yet I am perswaded, that that mans account shall be easier, at the Day of Iudgement, who performes but *one* part (and that the meanest) than his who performes *neither*.

I have done with my first Proposition : I come now to the second. *G O D accepts Mercie.*

By *Mercy* I understand any work of love and kindnesse, whether it be spirituall, or corporall, which one man can performe towards another. And that this is acceptable to *God*, it will bee no hard matter to prove. For since it is *His nature and property to have mercy and to forgive*, it cannot be, but that He needs must like and love His own vertues, when He sees them in His Creatures. Besides, His Divine providence hath distributed His blessings with an unequall hand, to some plentifully, to others sparingly; of purpose, that Hee might give these occasion to exercise their patience, and those their Charity. And therefore Hee hath so ordered the matter, that no man shall be so perfect in this world, but that,  
at

at some time or other, he may be a fit Object, of his Brothers Charity : Nor any so low and despicable, but that hee may be able to performe some worke of Mercie towards his Neighbour. Of which works of Mercy albeit our distressed Brother be the immediate *Object*; yet our blessed Saviour takes them, as done to Himselfe, and undertakes to reward them. *In as much as yee have done it to one of the least of these my Brethren, yee have done it unto mee, S. Matthew 25.40.*

Now what He takes to Himselfe, that He expects wee should so performe as to Himselfe : That in shewing kindnesse to our Brother, we should looke higher than our Brother; even to Him that made him, and loved him so dearely, that He thought not His owne blood too deare a price for him: And then, for His sake, cheerefully to doe Him all offices of love. When the Apostle Saint Paul calls an Almes-deed, *A Sacrifice wherewith God is well pleased, Hebr. 13. 16.* He meanes it of Almes that is done after this manner; that proceeds not merely from a naturall affection, but from the  
love

love of G O D spread abroad in our hearts. For if it be terminated in the Party that receives it, and have no reflexion upon the Deity; a *Kindnesse* it may be, a *Sacrifice* it is not: Wherefore, to make it a *Sacrifice*, it behoves that it be done for C H R I S T'S *Names sake*. And being so done, we may be as confident that it will be accepted with G O D, as wee are, that G O D is *righteous*. For marke the Phrase that Saint Paul uses, *Heb. 6. 10.* He sayes not, G O D is not *un-kinde*, but G O D is not *unrighteous*, that He will forget your worke and labour that proceedeth of love, which love yee have shewed for His Names sake. So that hee doth, in a manner, charge the *Holy One* with *Injustice*, if he should faile to recompence workes of *Mercy*.

Nay, more yet. Our Saviour seemes to imply, that G O D rewards no other vertue, but this; and punishes no other sin, but the want of this. For when all men shal stand before the Tribunall Seat of G O D; Those on the right hand, who shall heare that joyfull voyce, *Come yee blessed, &c.* they shall have none of their *vertues* taken notice

tice of, but their workes of Mercie: I was hungry, and yee fed me; naked, and yee clothed me, &c. And then againe <sup>that</sup> on the left hand, upon whom shall bee pronounced that dreadfull Sentence, *Goe yee cursed, &c.* they shall have none of their sinnes objected to them, but their want of Charitie. I was hungry, and yee gave mee no meat, &c. Saint Matth. 25. vers. 42.

All which is spoken to this end; not to discountenance or disgrace other vertues; God forbid; (they are all the gifts of God: His Spirit workes them in us; and His Mercy will not suffer the lowest of them to goe unrewarded;) but to intimate the singular preheminance of Charity above them all: *Quæ si desit, frustra habentur cætera; si adsit, habentur omnia:* If that bee missing, all the rest are to no purpose; if that bee present, no other grace can be missing. *S. August. tom. 10. de verb. Dom. Serm. 50.*

Hitherto I have proved nothing, touching works of Mercy, but that they are in high esteeme with God. You will say (perhaps) that it is one thing to be highly esteemed; and another thing to be intrinsically good.

D

True;



True; 'tis so with men; among whom it is no argument for the goodnesse of a thing, that it is well accepted. Evill works have sometimes the lot to be better approved, than their betters. But with G O D, it is otherwise: As His *understanding* is the Rule of all *Truth*: So is His *Will* the Rule of all *Goodnesse*. And therefore the inference is strong: This He likes well. *Ergo*,  
It is good.

This pleases Him better than that. *Ergo*,  
This is better than that.

And so I am fallen upon my third Proposition. G O D accepts *Mercy* better than *Sacrifice*.

This will aske some labour to make it good, in regard it seemes to be a Paradox in Divinity; That a Duty towards our *Neighbour* should take the upper hand of a Duty towards G O D. Yet that G O D Himselfe gives it this precedencie, it is evident; in that, in some cases, He dispenses with that which immediately concernes Himselfe, and connives at the omission of it, when a *worke of Mercy* is to be performed towards our Brother.

The



The Religious observation of the *Lords* Day, who doubts but that it is a part of *G O D's* immediate worship, and comes within the compasse of this word *Sacrifice*? On that Day we are bound to resort to *Gods* House, there to present our Petitions, and to be instructed out of His Word : yet not so bound, but that an act of Charitie may sue out a Dispensation, and set us at liberty. For when I am going to Church, thus to serve *G O D*; if my Brothers urgent necessity call upon me for helpe, I may divert my course, and obey that Call, without disobeying *G O D*.

And this holds good, not onely when *Mercy* is to be shewed to our *Brother*; but when the Law of Nature calls upon us to be mercifull to *our selves*. This was the case of *CHRIST's* owne Disciples, *Chap. 12.* of this Gospel: They were charged by the *Pharisees*, for doing that, on the Sabbath Day, which was not lawfull; *viz.* for plucking the eares of corne: Their Master excused them by alleaging on their behalfe this very Doctrin, on which we now are: That *G O D* loves *Mercy* better than *Sacri-*

*fice* ; and tels the fault-finding *Pharisees* directly, that if they had knowne what this meant, they would not have condemned the innocent. What? Innocent, and yet Sabbath-breakers? Yes. For he would have them to know that they are injurious to G O D's goodnesse, if they conceive Him so cruell, as to exact of men, on that Day, such a Cessation from bodily labour, as must endanger their lives. No : Though Hee require a strict observation of the Sabbath ; yet Hee requires withall, that no man hate his owne flesh, but that he nourish and cherish it : And therefore, when His Ordinance cannot be kept, but that the Law of Nature must be violated, and

S. Mar. 2. 27. His servants (for whom the Sabbath was made) well-nigh starved ; He reckons the breach of it to be no transgression ; pronounceth them innocent that had pitie on themselves.

And here it will not be from the purpose, to note unto you, the manner, how the fourth Commandement, the Law of the Sabbath, was given to the *Jewes*. One would think, that that Law aimed meerly at

at *Gods* worship; that by keeping of it no benefit could accrew to our Brother; that none was intended: yet if the matter be wel weighed, it will be found, that *God* in enacting that Law, had an eye to *Mercy*, as wel as *Sacrifice*; that He had a speciall regard to poore servants, that they should not be unmercifully handled by their masters; And therefore injoynd that Dayes rest, principally for His owne worship; but on the by, that men-servants and maid-servants might rest, as well as their Masters, *Deut. 5. 14.*

In imitation of which gentlenesse of *God*, when those gracious Guides and Governours under whom we live, have Declared their pleasure, that the LORDS Day be so sanctified, as that harmelesse recreations be not denied to Christians: Those that presume to censure *such Declaration*, they give in cleere evidence against themselves, that they are (to speake no worse of them) better friends to *Sacrifice*, than to *Mercy*. So is not *God*. Ye have seene, that He permits *Sacrifice* sometimes to stand aside, and give place to *Mercie*; whether it be *Mercie*

to our *Brother*, or mercy to *Our selves*: I may adde further, or Mercy to *A Beast*: For if an Oxe or an Ass be fallen into a pit; that I was imployed in lifting them out, it's a sufficient excuse for my absence from Prayers.

If this seeme strange to any man; the reason I take to be, for that hee considers only the Object of these two Acts, *Mercy* and *Sacrifice*; according to which if we give judgement, *Sacrifice* must needs excell *Mercy*, as much as the *Creature* comes short of the *Creator*.

\* *S. Aug. de  
Civit. Dei,  
lib. 10. c. 5.*

But let these Acts be considered another while, according to the necessity of them; and when it shall appeare that \* *God* hath no more need of our *Sacrifice*, than the fountaine, that I drinke of it; or the light, that I behold it: But our *Brother* hath so great need of our charity, that he may happen to perish, body and soule too, if wee take no pity on him; then must *Sacrifice* vaile bonnet to *Mercy*: But withall it must be acknowledged, a speciall argument of *Gods* love to us, that He so compasionates our infirmities, and condescends to our neces-

necessities, that He permits, yea, and en-  
joynes them to be releevd, though with  
the interruption or omilision of His more  
immediate worship.

This is very much; yet this is not all.  
For Hee doth not onely connive at the  
substitution of *Mercy* in the place of Sa-  
crifice: But professeth moreover, that  
Hee will not accept of the worke of *Pie-  
ty*, till the worke of *Mercy* bee accompli-  
shed. To bring a Gift to the Altar, is a  
worke of *Piety*; To be reconciled to our  
Brother, whom wee have wronged, is a  
worke of *Charity*: Yet till *this* be done,  
*God will none of that. Goe, first, and be re-  
conciled, and then come and offer, S. Matth. 5.*  
24. So that *God* requires it, as a Qualifica-  
tion in the party that will offer Him any  
acceptable Sacrifice; That he be in charity  
with his Brother. For let a man make ne-  
ver so many prayers, and tender them with  
behaviour of the greatest devotion, stretch-  
ing out his hands towards heaven, afflict-  
ing his soule with fasting, and hanging  
downe his head like a bulrush, for pensive-  
nesse: Yet, if *his hands be full of blond, God*  
*will*

will hide His eyes from him, He will not heare him, *Esay* 1. 15. His best sacrifices, confessions, thanksgiving, prayers, and humiliations, are an abomination unto the LORD, *Prov.* 15. 8. So farre from appeasing His wrath against other sins, as that they provoke His yet further displeasure against themselves.

I might here draw up a Parallel betwixt *Faith* and *Charity*. Is it impossible to please GOD without *Faith*? *Hebr.* 11. 6. So is it without *Charity*. Are the best workes of *Vnbelievers*, but *splendida peccata*, glittering sinnes? So are the best performances of the *uncharitable*. Is *Faith* the very *Life* of a Christian? Saint *Paul* implies so, *Galath.* 2. 20. *The life that I now live, I live by the faith of the Sonne of GOD.* And our Church averres no lesse of *Charity*; That without it, whosoever liveth is counted dead before GOD. *Collect on Quinquagesima Sunday.*

Now the ground of this Parallel is, because that *Faith* cannot be true, which worketh not by love; As that *Sacrifice* can have no sweet-smelling favour in the Nostrils

Nostrils of G O D, which is offered with an unmercifull hand.

In comparing *Mercy* with *Sacrifice*, I had thought at first, that a meere *Duty* towards our *Neighbour*, had beene compared with a *Duty* towards G O D: But by looking more narrowly into the Text, I perceive now, that to *shew mercy* to our *Neighbour*, is esteemed by G O D, as a speciall part of that duty which we owe to *Him*; and that in so doing we may bee as truly said to worship G O D, as if we prayed, gave thanks, or repented. Whence it is, that Saint *Iames* calls the visiting of the fatherlesse and widowes, not a worke of *charity*, (albeit so it be) but *pure religion*; and undefi- Chap. I. ver. led before G O D and the Father. 27.

So that, upon the matter, *Sacrificium hic praefertur Sacrificio*: One Sacrifice is here preferred before another: The Sacrifice of *Mercy*, before any *Act* of *Religion*, separated from *Mercy*, that is, before any *Act*, whereby G O D is worshipped, and our Brother not benefitted. And, I beseech you marke it, that I say, before any *Act* of Religious worship: for so the comparison



is made, and Mercy advanced, not above the *inward Devotion of the heart*; but above the *outward Act* of GOD's worship.

As for the *inward Devotion*, farre be it from us to think, that GOD likes any thing better than that; or that it is His will, that *That* (for a moment of time) should give place to *Mercy*. What needeth it to give place? They both may stand together well enough: May, did I say? Nay, they must alwayes goe together; such a mutuall dependence there is betwixt them, that you may boldly affirme, that hee that hath not *both*, hath neither.

1 Epist. of  
S. Iohn, c. 4.  
vers. 20.

Let no man therefore boast, that hee is *religious* towards his GOD, whilest hee is *unmercifull* towards his *Brother*; (for how can he love GOD, whom he hath not seen, that loves not his *Brother*, whom he hath seene?) Nor yet, on the other side, that he is *Mercifull* to his *Neighbour*, whilest he is *irreligious* towards GOD; (for how can he keepe any of the other nine; that breakes the first Commandement, the ground of al the rest?) But let *Piety* and *Charity* meet in the *heart*: For if these be in us and abound, they



they will make us that wee shall not bee barren, or unfruitfull in *Sacrifices*, or in *workes of Mercy* : Both which fruits are acceptable to G O D ; but the latter most acceptable : Because by the *former*, His Divine Majesty is worshipped (a thing which He hath no need of : ) By the latter, He is worshipped too; and over and above that, our Brothers necessity is supplied.

Thus much touching the Doctrine; my first Generall. The Exhortation followes. *Goe yee and learne what that meaneth : which Part 2.* I shall dispatch in a word.

Where the first thing I observe, is, How well C H R I S T hath fitted His Doctrine to the Parties to whom He speakes. *Goe ye and learne. Yee Pharisees*, who make void the Word of G O D by your Traditions; Ye, who when G O D commands you to honour your father and mother, and threatens certaine death to him that shall doe otherwise, will yet not honour them; but say unto them *Corban, S. Mark. 7. 11. It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me*, that is, ye give and dedicate to G O D (or rather pretend that ye have dedicated) that

wherewith you should help your Parents, in their necessity : upon you especially it lies, to learne this Doctrine, *God* likes *Mercy* better than *Sacrifice*: For if to decline your *Duty* towards your Parents, you doe but pretend a *Dedication*, when indeed there is none ; then are ye *Hypocrites*, guilty of double iniquity, and to be punished with double punishment. Or if yee have indeed devoted your goods to *God*, know yet that such a *Vow* is not well pleasing to Him ; who would have taken it better, ye should have bestowed them on so *charitable* a worke, as the releefe of your Parents.

Some are of opinion, that the Pharisees *Corban* doth not imply, that he hath dedicated his goods to *God* ; but onely that hee hath made a *Vow*, and taken an *Oath*, That none of his wealth shall ever be profitable to his Parents ; and then thinkes himselfe bound to keepe his *vow* to *God*, though with the forfeiture of his duty to Father and Mother. If this bee his case ; it will concerne him yet to goe learne what that meaneth, *I will have mercy, &c.* For if he under-

understand this well, he will perceive that his *vow* is irreligious, and flatly opposite to *Gods* Precept, which enjoynes him to honour his Parents with his substance : And therefore, as it was a wicked thing to make such a *vow*; so it will be more wicked, to keepe it.

This Exhortation thus fitted for the *Pharisees*, is applicable also to some of our times; as namely to the Monkes and Friers: Of whom that of *S. Gregory* is true; 'They are *Rari in publico operis, assidui in se-* *Greg. in 1.  
Reg. cap. 14.  
Expositio.  
lib. 5.*  
*creto contemplationis.* They place all perfection in sequestering themselves from all Company, and (as it were) burying themselves alive in their cloyster: And this they call *Ingreddi Religionem*, to enter into a Religious estate; as if all other courses of life were *irreligious*.

Admit that they did (which I doubt they doe not) spend their whole time in contemplating the power and wisdom of *God*, by which He made and governes the *Vniverse*: In giving Him thanks for the manifold blessings, which daily and hourly He powreth on the sons of men;

In offering up the daily *Sacrifice* of Prayer, for the establishment of True beleevers, and the conversion of Infidels. Yet I conceive it would bee no difficult thing to shew them a more excellent way : I suppose they should performe a Service no lesse acceptable to G O D, if they would change Contemplation into Action ; if instead of *admiring*, they would *imitate* the Wisdome of G O D, in giving counsell to the simple, and instructing the ignorant ; and his loving kindnesse, in seeking and bringing backe the lost sheepe to the fold of C H R I S T. They doe well in lifting up their hands in Prayer for their afflicted Brethren : But they might doe better, if they would also put to their hands to help them. It cannot be denied, but that they are *pious men* ; but then that piety which they have, they *have it to themselves* : not in that sense, which Saint Paul wisheth a man to have *faith to himselfe*, Rom. 14. 22. that is, not to make boast of it, to the scandal of his weak Brother : but they have it to themselves ; that is, no other man is the better for it. These speculative men (to give them their due)

due) are in a good way to enrich their own mindes with knowledge, and to attaine to a cleare vision of truth; But the Practicall man hath more opportunities of doing good; and 'tis *practice*, not bare *speculation* to which our *Saviour* here exhorts. *Goe yee and learne, &c.*

But I need not seeke abroad for men to whom to apply this Exhortation: We have them nearer home, who have as much need to learne what this meaneth, as either Monkes or Pharisees. Such are they, who think they please G O D (so well, as no men better) if they spend all the weeke in hearing of Sermons; albeit in the meane time, they are so neglectfull, so unmercifull towards their Families; that they provide for them none of those things which the Son of *Syrach* thought necessary for servants: *Eccclus. c. 33. neither Bread, nor Correction, nor Worke. vers. 24.*

The same indiscreet zeale hath possessed also many of the weaker sex: whence it comes to passe, that when they should be <sup>a</sup> *guiding the house,* <sup>b</sup> *putting their hands to* <sup>1 Tim. 5. 14.</sup> *the spindle and distaffe, giving meate to their* <sup>Prov. 31. 15. 19.</sup> *household, and a portion to their maides; they*  
(for-

(forsooth) are at Church, or (more likely) at some private conventicle, hearing some factious Teacher; whom they love and admire, they know not for what, unlesse it be for bewailing the times, and speaking evill of Governours.

He that should tell these people, that they might doe God as good service, by staying at home, as going to Church; by being industrious in that Trade and calling wherein God hath placed them; as by hunting after Lectures; would hardly be beleaved. And yet to say this, upon such occasion, were in effect no more, than what our Saviour here tels the *Pharisees*; *God loves Mercy rather than Sacrifice*. Which one point did they well understand; many other things which are now amisse, would be amended. To name one; They would not (as they doe) make their zeale towards God, and His Word, a cloake to palliat their want of naturall affection towards their owne flesh. 'Tis no slander this; For who sees not, that they have a spice of the *Pharisees Corban*, whilest they dedicate to God (so they reckon, whatsoever is spent on their  
ghostly

ghostly Fathers, the silenced Ministers) that, wherewith their carnall Parents should be relieved, and their owne children provided for.

I pity these poore seduced soules, from my heart; nor doe I see, wherein one might doe them a greater kindnesse, than in rectifying their erroneous consciences in these points. For consider, I pray, what a perplexity it must needs be to a man, that dwelling in such a City as this (where there is (perhaps) a sermon to be heard, in some Church or other, every houre in the day) takes himselfe bound in conscience to heare as many of them as is possible; and to manifest his zeale by his bounty towards those Preachers who please him best. If he do not according to his conscience, his owne heart wil condemne him of impiety and neglect of G o d's holy Word, the ordinary meanes of salvation: And if he doe follow his peevish conscience, *S. Paul* wil condemne him for worse than an infidel, in as much as he hath no care to provide for his owne, especially for those of his house, 1 *Tim.* 5. 8.

But, alas, it is too evident; that 'tis not



conscience, but Faction, wherewith he is led. For let the Church require his presence at Divine Service, on Holy-dayes, Wednesdays, and Fridayes; then the care of his family shall steppe in to elude the Churches Precept: Then he can pretend, that the losse of so many houres worke would improveish him and all his; and that the Church is a cruell step-mother, that enjoynes *Sacrifice* which cannot consist with *Mercy*.

Canon 15.

The Churches moderation in this matter is cleare enough; it needs not my Apologie: Twere wel if such pretenders could make their owne sincerity as cleare; which is impossible, whilest thus they play fast and loose; fast at *Sermons*; loose at *Prayers*; fast at *Will-worship*; loose at what good authority enjoynes.

Thus have I shewed, that CHRIST'S exhortation was well fitted to the *Pharisees*: And that the same is appliable to some of our times.

I might further observe; How by this one short speech our Saviour both justifies Himselfe, (intimating that He had done a worke of mercy, in admitting *Publicans* and sinners



sinner's into His Company) and also re-  
proves them that censured Him for it.

And then againe, how He sets them to  
schoole; a sore punishment for such superci-  
lious *Rabbies*, that thought themselves fit to  
teach him what company he should keep.

And this Pride of theirs may be the rea-  
son, why *Christ* Himself would not under-  
take to instruct them (as being not meeke  
enough to be His disciples) but sends them  
away, *Goe yee and learne, &c.*

These points I have not time to enlarge.  
I shall therefore shut up all; when I have but  
told you, that the Doctrine and the Exhor-  
tation in my Text, are not unseasonable for  
this time of *Lent.*. A time (you know)  
of Repentance, Fasting, and Humiliation.  
Which duties albeit they come within the  
compasse of *Sacrifice*; (*for the Sacrifice of* *Psal. 51. 17.*  
*God is a troubled spirit.*) Yet if you aske the  
Prophet *Esay*, How this Sacrifice must be  
offered; what manner of fasting the Lord  
requires? He will direct you to workes of  
*Mercy*. *This is the Fast that GOD requires,*  
*That thou deale thy bread to the hungry.* *Cap. 58. v. 7.*

Not that this can properly be called a  
F 2 Fast;

*Faſt*, but becauſe this muſt alwayes be an  
*Attendant* or *Conſequent* upon our *Faſt*  
*ing*. For unleſſe the poore fare the better  
 for our *faſting*; unleſſe our *Abſtinence* be  
 their *Suſtenance*; it is to be ſuſpected, that  
 we *faſt* more for *Covetouſneſſe*, than *true*  
*devotion*; and that we are all for *Sacrifice*,  
 for *Mercy* not at all.

Laſtly, ſince the *Lent-faſt* was ordained  
 (as for other reaſons, ſo eſpecially) to pre-  
 pare and fit us, for the better celebration of  
*Eaſter*; certainly it was never meant, it  
 ſhould be unaccompanied with *workes of*  
*Mercy*. For in very ill caſe ſhall we be to  
 keepe *that Feaſt*; if we only tame our fleſh,  
 and bring it in ſubjection; but have no  
 care to root out of our hearts the leaven of  
 malice and uncharitableneſſe.

That we may doe both; G O D of His  
 infinite mercy aſſiſt us by His Grace; And  
 that through the merits and mediation of  
 His deare Sonne, and our *Saviour I E S U S*  
 C H R I S T.

To whom with the *Father*, and the  
*Bleſſed Spirit*, &c.

F I N I S.

ia/c